




# Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan: Draft for Council Adoption

Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, October 15, 2020  
*Howard County Planning Board*



Mahan Rykiel | Arnett Muldrow | RK&K | Land Studies | SouthCoast Consulting | Preservation Consulting  
*In consultation with: McCormick Taylor*

# Planning Board Public Meeting

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- Master plan proposed to be a General Plan Amendment
- Planning Board will make a recommendation to the County Council pursuant to Howard County Code §16.900(j)(1)(III) which states:
  - *“A bill proposing the adoption and amendment of the Comprehensive General Plan... shall not be added to the Council's legislative agenda until the County Council has received... a recommendation and report from the Planning Board.”*

# Distinguishing Features of the Master Plan

- **The master plan is a flexible document:**
  - Menu of options
  - Policies and goals that are designed to be adaptable.
- **The master plan offers early design guidance:**
  - Early guidance for projects such as the lower main channel
  - Not meant to represent the final design or only design option
  - If some element of the flood mitigation plan does not come to fruition, the overall comprehensive nature of the master plan—its goals, desired outcomes and policies—should be looked upon for guidance.



# What the Master Plan Contains

## Policies and Implementing Actions

### POLICY 7.4 ELLICOTT CITY RIVERFRONT PARK

Establish a riverfront park on the Ellicott City side of the river adjacent to Lot B to provide greater access to the Patapsco River. The park can be comprised of a boardwalk along the edge of Lot B and a re-designed Lot B, as described below, to function as park space during certain events.

#### Implementing Actions

- Boardwalk Overlook:** Explore opportunities to incorporate a boardwalk along the riverside edge of Parking Lot B above flood elevation and in a way that it could withstand flood events, working around existing trees. Utilize an ornamental fence and gates to allow river access via a nature path with stone steps and, if possible, an ADA accessible ramp.
  - River Access:** Incorporate access points for kayaks and fishing.
  - Site Amenities:** Incorporate site amenities such as seating, trash receptacles and lighting.
  - Trailhead:** Recognize that this space has the potential to be a trailhead for multiple trails and integrate that into the overall design with appropriate bicycle accommodations, wayfinding, visitor information and interpretation.
  - Public Art:** Allow for permanent and temporary river and nature-focused public art.
- Phasing:** Coordinate the design and implementation of the park with the North Tunnel outfall construction while the lot is closed as a staging area.

### POLICY 7.5 LOT B

In conjunction with the development of a riverfront park, redesign Lot B as an expanded riverfront park.

#### OPTION 1

Design as a flexible use space that can function as an extension of the park for special events while continuing to function as a parking resource most of the time.

This approach would be particularly important if Lot A remains surface parking and if the Wilkins Rogers mill site is not available for public parking.

#### Implementing Actions

- Paving Treatment:** Utilize special paving, including permeable paving, to delineate parking areas and define a zone that could be closed for events.
- Planting Islands:** Incorporate planting islands to allow for canopy trees.
- Ornamental Lighting:** Provide lighting that is sensitive to the riverfront location and reinforces Lot B as a parking lot and park space.



Figure 125: Riverfront Park and Lot B Flexible Use Space, For Illustrative Purposes Only

## Considerations (Non-Policy)

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR WILKINS ROGERS MILL SITE

This riverfront site offers great potential for creative, adaptive reuse that could dramatically change the character and function of the Riverfront. As of spring 2020, Baltimore County is considering rezoning the site from industrial use to mixed use. In context with this reuse, Baltimore County should consider the following:

- Interpretive Components:** Explore opportunities to incorporate arts and interpretive components, including the section of the early mill's stone wall.
- Public Open Space:** Explore opportunities to incorporate arts and interpretive components, accessible connections, particularly along the riverfront.
- Public Parking:** If the property reuse can accommodate it, explore opportunities for publicly through potential temporary or shared parking arrangements.
- Tour Bus Accommodations:** Explore opportunities for tour bus parking and/or turnaround area.
- Emergency Public Alert System:** Because the site is located within the 100-year floodplain, consider incorporating emergency public alert systems similar to those being installed throughout Ellicott City's core as part of EC Safe and Sound.



Figure 127: Ellicott City Riverfront Birds Eye View, For Illustrative Purposes Only



# Master Plan Frameworks

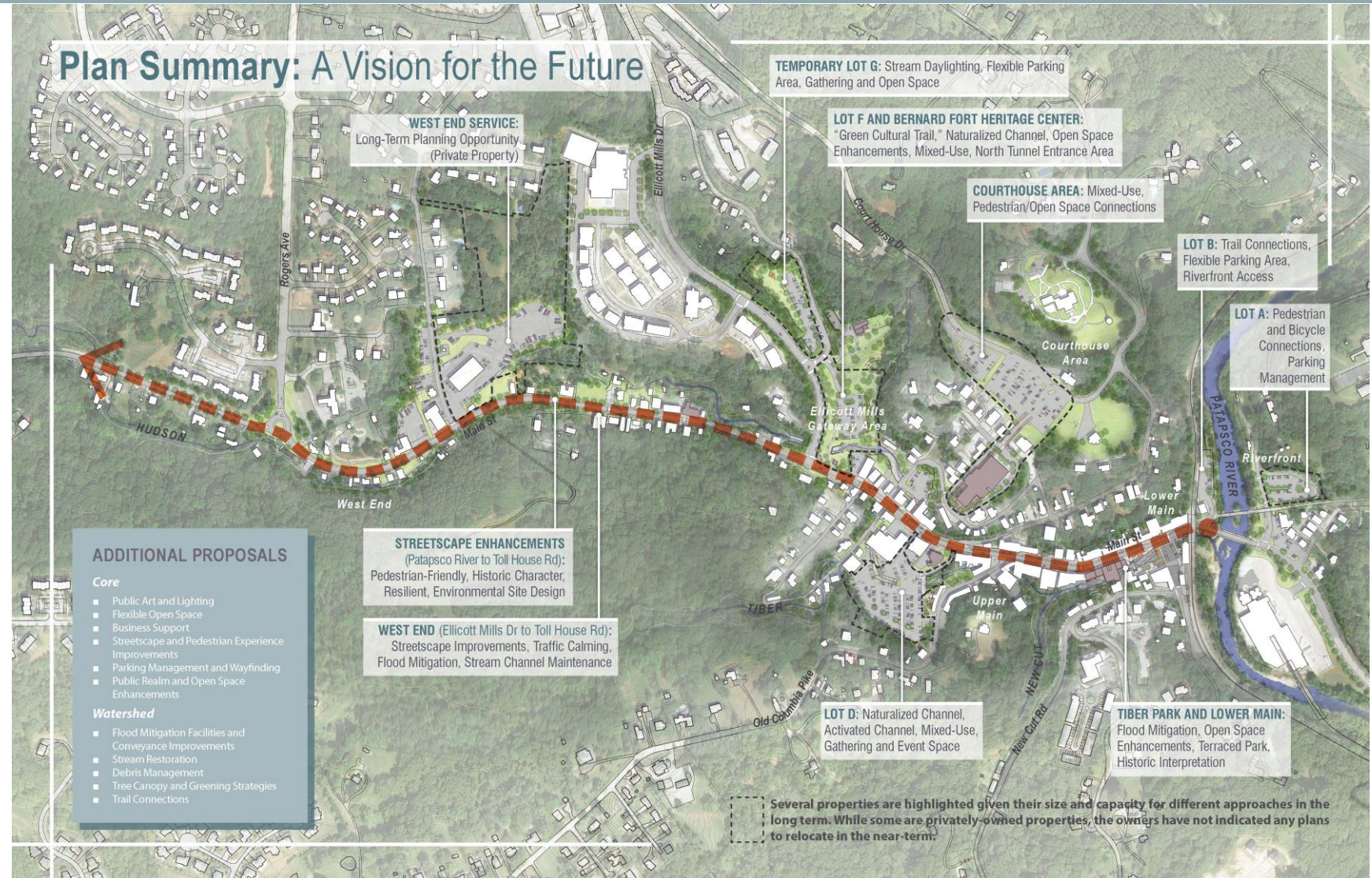
1. Community Character + Placemaking
2. Flood Mitigation
3. Environmental Stewardship
4. Economic Development
5. Transportation + Parking
6. Streetscapes
7. Riverfront
8. Lower Main
9. Upper Main
10. Ellicott Mills Gateway
11. West End
12. Courthouse Area





# Summary Graphic

- Menu of options
- Domino effect of changes in one location
- Resulting opportunities elsewhere





# Illustrative Example

## III.7 Riverfront

### OPTION:

Construct a new bridge dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists where the trolley bridge once stood as a direct extension from the Trolley Line #9 Trail.



# Illustrative Example

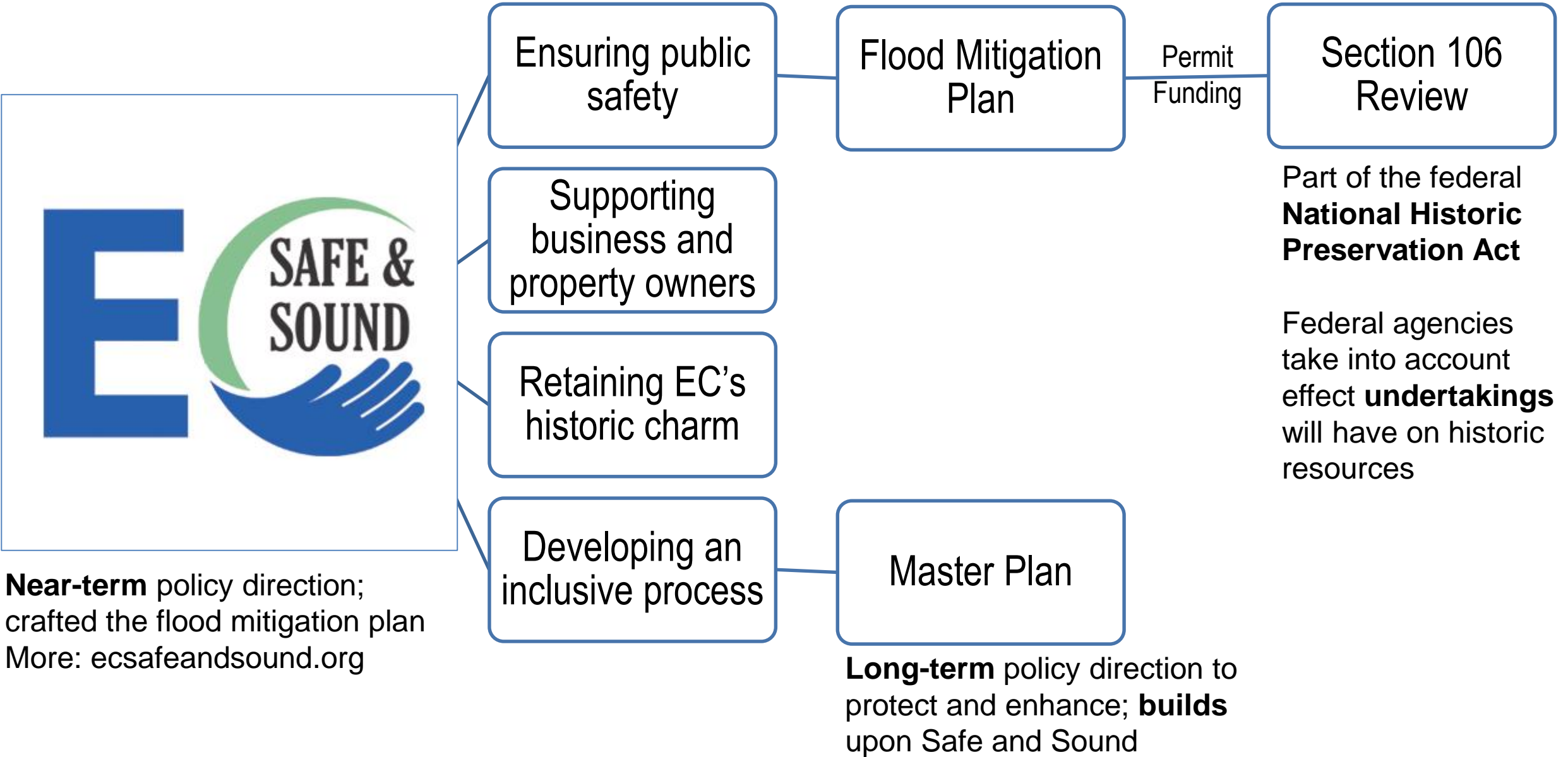
## III.7 Riverfront

Integration of other concepts, considerations and recommendations...





# Master Plan Relationship to EC Safe and Sound Plan



# Multi-Year Public Engagement Effort



[www.howardcountymd.gov/ecmp](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/ecmp)





# “rECovery” Community Meetings – Fall 2016

- Four ‘listen & learn’ sessions
- Professional facilitator
- 300+ project ideas



### rECovery Community Meeting #2 Rebuilding and Economic Development Final Report

December 1, 2016

Participants listened to presentation on economic development efforts in Ellicott City

On December 1st, residents, community members, and stakeholders of the Greater Ellicott City area met at Roger Carter Community Center to: engage in community dialogue, learn from a presentation by an expert from the City of Frederick, and share ideas for rebuilding a stronger and more resilient Ellicott City. This meeting was the third in a series of four. The meetings all focused on rebuilding with an emphasis on resilient infrastructure and flood mitigation. This meeting had a special additional focus on economic development.

Throughout the evening, participants were able to share their thoughts and feelings on the recovery process and learn about the County's response and the process moving forward. Participants engaged in facilitated group discussions and used keypad polling to provide instant feedback. This feedback will assist the County in identifying clear priorities for rebuilding a stronger, more resilient Ellicott City.

**Polling results:**

#### What is your relationship to Ellicott City? (press all that apply)

50%	1. I live there
25%	2. I work there
14%	3. I own a business there
69%	4. I shop there
14%	5. I worship there
42%	6. I own property there
31%	7. Other



Keypad used to record participants votes

#### How important is it to you to rebuild Old Ellicott City?

82%	1. Very important
12%	2. Moderately important
4%	3. Slightly important
2%	4. Not at all important

#### How long have you lived, worked or regularly visited (shopped, dined, worshiped) in Ellicott City?

3%	1. I don't live, work, or regularly visit Ellicott City
37%	2. Less than 5 years
34%	3. 5 - 10 years
26%	4. 11 - 20 years
15%	5. More than 20 years

## rECovery Project Idea Themes

The following are the themes that have emerged from over 250 individual project ideas collected thus far from community members and stakeholders interested in the recovery process of Ellicott City. This growing list has been distilled into themes that were repeated by multiple individuals to create a general picture of the types of ideas already put forward. The feasibility of individual project ideas will be evaluated and projects will be considered both for implementation in the short term or as part of the Master Plan process. The full list of ideas will be published on the Ellicott City Flood Recovery website.



### Rebuilding/Infrastructure

- **Parking areas:** Eliminate parking on Main St., establish loading and unloading areas and increase structured or improve existing surface parking with stormwater retention and green infrastructure.
- **Sidewalks:** Widen and improve sidewalks, add crosswalks and create a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians/tourists.
- **Utilities:** Increase water/sewer capacity, relocate power and communication lines underground.
- **Retention:** Construct retention areas on public and private property throughout the Tiber Hudson and Plum Tree Branch watershed.
- **Building floodproofing:** Implement best floodproofing practices in renovations and construction efforts, such as building elevation and use of flood resistant materials.
- **Public amenities:** Construct public amenities such as additional outdoor seating, river promenade and restroom facilities.
- **Channel improvements:** Increase/improve stormwater conveyance throughout Tiber Hudson and Valley Mede watersheds. Construct new storm drains as well as expand and maintain existing storm drains. Provide more access points to streams. Redirect waterways.
- **Transit:** Provide bus or trolley transit services on Main Street.
- **Streets:** Create a more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment and reduce vehicular traffic speeds.
- **Flood gate:** Construct a flood gate/dam/fence to protect Ellicott City from Patapsco River overflow.



### Environment

- **Native planting:** Remove invasive plant species and replace with native plants and trees.
- **Adding and improving open space:** Reduce soil erosion, preserve natural floodplain and wetland functions, increase exposure of streams where possible.
- **Stormwater management:** Establish accurate baseline data in order to properly retrofit properties with stormwater management.
- **Environmental education:** Increase public awareness of flood mitigation tactics and flood preparedness.

# Outreach Activities – 2017 to 2019

- 7 Public Workshops
- 7 Master Plan Advisory Team Meetings
- Informal ‘pop up’ activities
- Stakeholder interviews





# Online Input – 2017 to 2019

- Interactive ESRI Story Maps
- Surveys
- Open-ended comment forms
- 600+ online responses



# Public Comment Window – July-August 2020

- Public draft available for comment for over 30 days (July 21 to Aug 28)
- Nearly 450 comments collected on the public draft, through:
  - An open-ended survey
  - A PDF commenting platform (Konveio)
  - At a virtual community meeting held on August 19
  - At a special virtual meeting for Baltimore County residents held on August 24
  - Via emails sent to DPZ
  - Via phone calls to DPZ
- Appointed groups provided input – Historic Preservation Commission (August 6<sup>th</sup>) and the Master Plan Advisory Team (August 26<sup>th</sup>)



# Broad Range of Comments Collected

EC Safe and Sound flood mitigation	97	Flood protection – private sector	10
Spelling, grammar, formatting	45	Economic development	9
Parking garages	34	Implementation	9
Streetscape	33	Lower Main	9
Riverfront	24	Plan scope	9
Alternative transportation modes	19	Planning process	8
Environmental stewardship	19	COVID	7
Recreational trails and experiences	18	Events	5
Historic preservation	17	West End	5
Public amenities and facilities	16	Vision statement and goals	4
Courthouse	13	Climate change	2
Regulations	13	Ellicott Mills Gateway	2
Support for the plan	12	Heritage area	2
		Affordable housing	1

# Top Four Categories of Comments

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1. **EC Safe and Sound flood mitigation plan** – 97 comments addressed specific flood mitigation projects, the proposed removal of buildings in Lower Main, and the Section 106 review process.
2. **Spelling, grammar, formatting, references** – 45 comments suggested minor changes to text, captions, etc.
3. **Parking garages** – 34 comments provided feedback on garages identified as options in various locations.
4. **Streetscape** – 33 comments offered input on sidewalk materials, utility poles, drive lanes, etc.



# Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan

October 2020  
Draft for Council Adoption



Department of Planning & Zoning  
Howard County, MD — Adopted: \_\_\_\_ X, 2020

MAHAN RYKIEL  
OWNER DESIGN PARTNER  
RK&K  
LandStudies  
Arnett Muldrow & Associates  
Preservation Consulting  
South Coast Consulting

## Exhibit B

### Executive Summary

*PlanHoward 2030* is the County's new general plan. With this new name comes a new, forward-looking approach and an exciting launch into a greener and more sustainable future – environmentally, economically, and for our communities. *PlanHoward 2030* celebrates accomplishments and charts the next steps forward so Howard County can continue to enhance our high quality of life. Howard County's plan includes many of the new planning approaches from *PlanMaryland*, the new statewide development plan. This document is available online, as are all *PlanHoward 2030*-related materials, at [www.planhoward.org](http://www.planhoward.org).

This plan highlights key issues and goals for future planning efforts. In other words, *PlanHoward 2030* is a framework that sets out a scope of work and policies for the next two decades. Each policy includes appropriate implementation actions that are prioritized as one of three categories: short-term (one to three years), mid-term (four to seven years), and long-term (eight years or more). For a quick overview, summary matrices of policies and implementing actions are in Appendix A.

#### Overview

*PlanHoward 2030* is structurally organized into three major parts to address the three key aspects of sustainability – environment, economy, and community quality of life. With an introductory section and concluding implementation section, the plan is comprised of a total of five sections. *PlanHoward 2030* uses the 12 Maryland State Planning Visions to structure 12 chapters.

Section I, Introduction, includes the two overarching Maryland visions that guide *PlanHoward 2030*: Quality of Life & Sustainability and Public Participation. The second section, Environment, addresses two visions: Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation. The third, Economy, is comprised of three visions: Economic Development, Growth, and Transportation. The fourth, Community, addresses three visions: Public Facilities and Services, Housing, and Community Design. The last section, Action!, ends with two visions: Implementation and Stewardship.

*PlanHoward 2030* is an update to General Plan 2000. Two recently adopted general plan amendments, the Water Resource Element (WRE) and the Downtown Columbia Plan (DCP) will not be modified or replaced. These are included in *PlanHoward 2030* by reference. **ADOPTED AS A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT IN 2020, THE ELICOTT CITY WATERSHED MASTER PLAN IS FURTHER INCLUDED IN PLANHOWARD 2030 BY REFERENCE.**

#### Key Issues

Since adoption of General Plan 2000, changing circumstances, new priorities and approaches, and the recent recession have modified what is needed in Howard County to sustain its high quality of life. For the next 20 years, the population will continue to increase and become more diverse with more diverse needs. The recent recession and slow recovery means State and local funding will likely remain constricted in the near term while needs are increasing. Partnerships and collaboration are essential to achieving *PlanHoward 2030* goals. Howard County has a progressive and innovative culture on which to build. Key initiatives include:

- **Environmental Protection.** New actions focus on implementation of a Watershed Implementation Plan to achieve mandatory water quality goals and promotion of environmental stewardship by diverse stakeholders.
- **Resource Conservation.** A new Green Infrastructure Network Plan is proposed; the land and character of the Rural West will be protected through strategies to enhance the farm economy and to balance agricultural, residential, and commercial uses; and expanded historic preservation initiatives are proposed.
- **Economic Development.** Strategies are recommended to promote business innovation and growth, and to make Howard County a leader in 21st century technologies. Particular attention is given to the US 1 Corridor and changing economic conditions identified by a market study. Workforce development and the promotion of training in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are another focus.

Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2020 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. \_\_\_\_

Bill No. \_\_\_\_-2020

Introduced by: The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

AN ACT amending *PlanHoward 2030*, the general plan for Howard County, to include The Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan and recognizing that the Plan is a comprehensive, long-range document created by a community-driven vision for historic Ellicott City and the Tiber Branch Watershed; and generally relating to planning, zoning and land use in Howard County.

Introduced and read first time \_\_\_\_\_, 2020. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator

This Bill was read the third time on \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 and Passed \_\_\_\_\_, Passed with amendments \_\_\_\_\_, Failed \_\_\_\_\_.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 at \_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator

Approved/Vetted by the County Executive: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

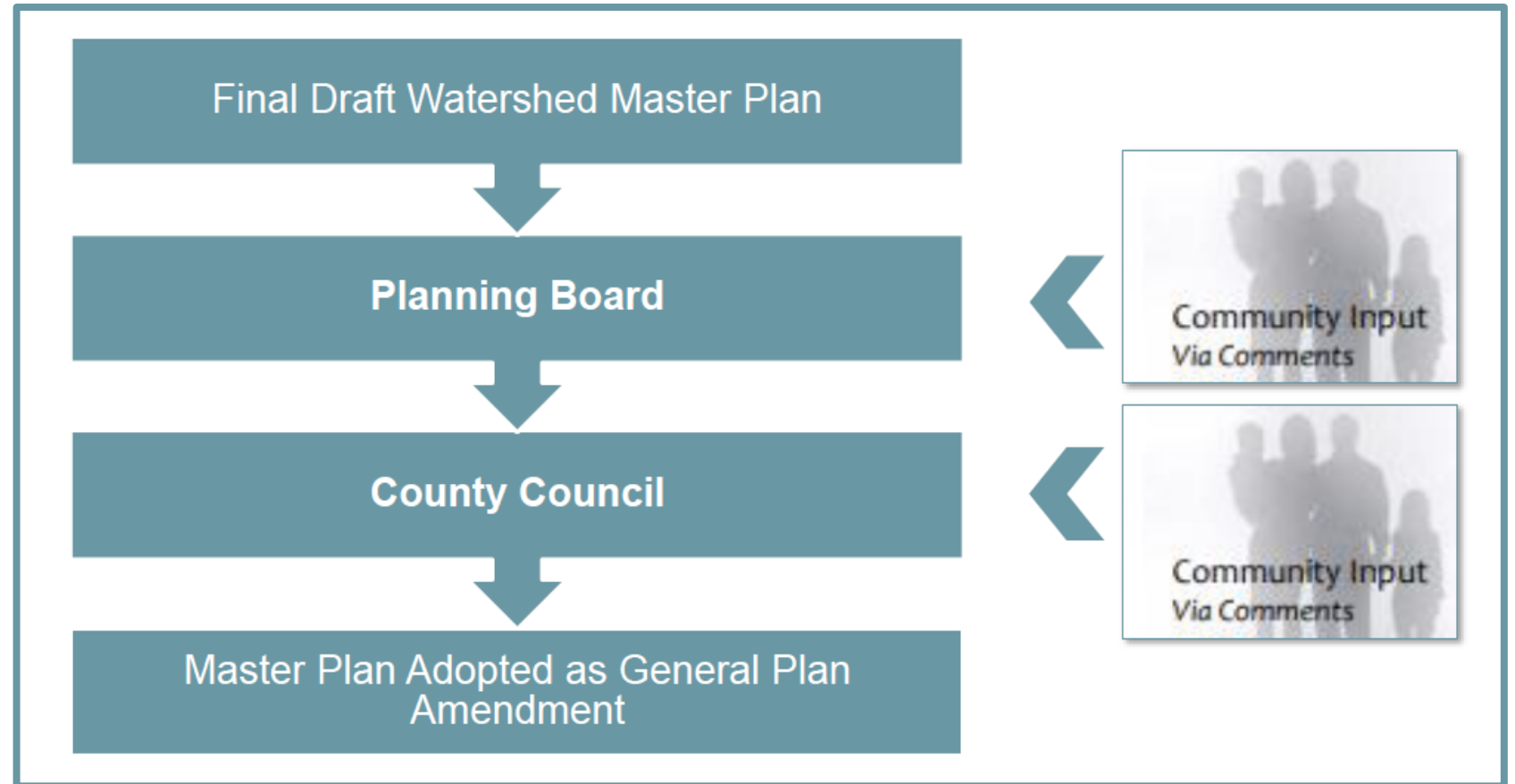
Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~text~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; text indicates material added by amendment

# Proposed General Plan Amendment

# Next Steps

1. Planning Board Recommendation
2. County Council Process





# Planning Board Review

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- Planning Board will make a recommendation to the County Council pursuant to Howard County Code §16.900(j)(1)(III) which states:
  - *“A bill proposing the adoption and amendment of the Comprehensive General Plan... shall not be added to the Council's legislative agenda until the County Council has received... a recommendation and report from the Planning Board.”*

# DPZ Recommendation

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- That the Planning Board recommend approval of the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan (Exhibit A) and an amendment to PlanHoward 2030, the general plan for Howard County, to include the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan (the Plan) by reference (Exhibit B).





# Thank You

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